GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:5
ANSWERED ON:01.12.2004
TELEPHONE FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS
Chandel Shri Suresh;Shandil Dr. (Col.) Dhani Ram

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the Government has converted the department of telecommunications into a Corporation, difficulties are being faced in providing telephone facilities in rural areas particularly in inaccessible areas of the hill States;

(b) whether in many such inaccessible areas where the department of telecommunications has already approved their schemes for establishing Telephone Exchanges, the officials of the Corporation are giving instructions that Telephone Exchanges should not be set up there from where return is supposed to be meagre;

(c) if so, whether the targets fixed by the Government to provide telecommunication facilities to cent percent villages by the end of the year 2004 will be achieved; and

(d) if not, the efforts being made by the Government to achieve the target?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 5 FOR 1ST DECEMBER, 2004 REGARDING TELEPHONE FACILITIES IN RURAL AREAS.

(a) to (d) Since its formation on 1.10.2000, by way of corporatisation of the Department of Telecom. Service and the Department of Telecom Operations, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has been providing telephone facilities in rural areas keeping in view availability/deployment of wireless technologies and based on techno-economic considerations.

All cases where the establishment of telephone exchanges were already approved by Department of Telecommunications (DOT) have been completed. Some proposals for establishing new exchanges were not approved, after review, by BSNL during 2003-04 as they were not found conforming to the norms of techno-economic viability.

There are as on date 66,822 villages without Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the country, excluding villages which are depopulated, naxalite/insurgency infested, having population of less than hundred persons and those lying in deep forest areas. The work of provision of VPTs in these remaining villages on Satellite media or otherwise have been awarded to BSNL by the office of Administrator Universal Service Obligation (USO) Fund. The work is targeted to be completed within three years i.e. by November, 2007.

BSNL has finalised tender for Satellite based VPTs as well as WLL equipment in order to cover all the villages. Advance Purchase Orders has been released by BSNL for supply of Satellite based village Public Telephones as well as for WLL equipment in order to cover most of the villages in hill states, with subsidy from USO Fund.